

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01 /070 W

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R 282139Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7995

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 08009

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR FR CB US

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON INDOCHINA

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON MARCH 28, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA (BOLLE) OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.

2. ALTHOUGH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (ARVN) HAD ABANDONED A GREAT DEAL OF TERRITORY, IT STILL HAD THE MEANS TO DEFEND ITSELF. MOREOVER, THE GVN STILL LARGELY CONTROLLED THE ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT PARTS OF SOUTH VIETNAM, III AND IV CORPS. THE PRESENT SOUTH VIETNAMESE RETREAT DEMONSTRATED THE WISDOM OF THE LONG-HELD FRENCH BELIEF THAT COCHIN CHINA WAS A VIABLE ECONOMIC UNIT WITH DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

3. SOUTH VIETNAM'S CURRENT CRISIS WAS PSYCHOLOGICAL RATHER THAN MATERIAL. THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY HAD THE WILL TO DEFEND ITSELF. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE IN SAIGON BELIEVED THAT THE MORALE OF ARVN HAD VIRTUALLY COLLAPSED. HOWEVER, BOLLE THOUGHT THE ATTACHE'S JUDG-
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MENT WAS PERHAPS UNDULY PESSIMISTIC.

4. BOLLE SAID THE FRENCH EMBASSY HAD NOT REPORTED ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARREST OF THE SEVEN "PLOTTERS" IN SAIGON.

5. TURNING TO CAMBODIA, BOLLE THOUGHT "THE GAME WAS UP" FOR LON NOL AND HIS DEPARTURE WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT HOW LONG THIS TIME WOULD BE--IT COULD BE "DAYS, WEEKS OR MONTHS." FURTHER, IF THE GKR SUCCEEDED IN PUSHING BACK THE KHMER ROUGE AROUND POCHETONG AIRPORT, THE U.S. AIRLIFT COULD PROVIDE PHNOM PENH WITH THE MATERIAL RESOURCES TO SURVIVE FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
RUSH

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